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ABSTRACT

This paper describes the use of special "Intervention Teachers" to address the needs of severely learning disabled (LD) high school students in a Chicago Public High School. In this approach the Intervention Teacher, a trained LD teacher, consults with, helps, and observes the regular teacher's instructional plans and implementation. Intervention teachers attempt to provide effective support services to the subject area teachers and direct instruction to the learning disabled students. Much of the paper provides background to the development of the Intervention Teacher approach including the population involved, the influence of the Chicago School Reform Act which decentralized school responsibilities, the special education supervisory hierarchy in the Chicago Public Schools, the continuum of learning disabilities services in the system (e.g., mainstreaming, resource support services, cooperative team teaching, and the direct instructional approach). The needs and development of the Intervention Teacher approach in the specific school is discussed in terms of problem identification, the team approach, research and review of other programs, and the development of the Intervention Teacher position. Includes 34 references. (DB)

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Intervention Teachers:

A Promising Answer to the Challenge

of

Educating High School Learning Disabilities Students

by

Diane L. Jackson

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RATIONALE

Chicago Public High Schools are faced with an all too familiar challenge common to every high school across the country. This challenge is to provide the most appropriate, most effective academic program for students with severe learning disabilities.

Defining the Challenge

This challenge is the result of several developments: increased special education erollment, inappropriate placements in special education programs, ineffective special education programs, low percentage of students being transitioned out of special education programs, public and political pressure for accountability within the educational system, and the ineffective use of special education supervisors have been some of the main contributing factors.

At the elementary grades, self-contained learning disabilities (SLD) services are available to students who cannot benefit from the regular academic program due to serve processing, motoric, and/or academic deficits. In the SLD program the student is taught by the SLD teacher along with no more than nine other students with similar deficits, all who are within a three year age range of each other. Their instructional day starts at nine o'clock and continues until about three o'clock in the

afternoon. The SLD students are mainstreamed into regular classes where ever possible, usually gym, music, and library.

Although mainstreaming is emphasized at the junior high grades (6th, 7th, and 8th), often high schools receive students who have been self contained for several years, have had limited mainstreaming (gym and library), and who are reading and doing math below the 6th grade level. Once these students are transitioned into high school, the challenge to educate them really begins.

Identifying the Population Involved

It has been estimated that of the more than 39 million young people enrolled in public schools, over 10% are eligible for special services. Another 10% to 20% of youths in our public schools are not identified, but have mild or moderate learning and behavior difficulties which interfere with their educational progress. It is therefore estimated that 20% to 30% of all school-aged youths, or at least 7,800,000 students are having difficulty progressing in the public schools in the United States. Over 5,000,000 are receiving services through special programs serving the educationally and linguistically disadvantaged (Will, 1985).[1]

Of the number of students receiving special education services, approximately 50% are receiving learning disabilities services. According

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[1]Will, M. C. (1986). Educating children with learning problems: A shared responsibility. Exceptional Children, 52(5), 411-415.

to (Keogh, 1988, p. 3),[2] "A U.S. department of Education Report-1987, indicates that almost 5% of all school-aged children nationally receive special education services under the LD rubric. LD comprises the largest proportion of pupils considered mildly handicapped."

Each year has seen an increase in the number of children eligible for special education services. At one point, in the early 70's, there were so many minority children labeled educably mentally handicapped (EMH) that the federal government mandated a reassessment of each child using a more 'non-bias' instrument to verify their eligibility and need for this type of service.

As a result of this mandated reassessment, thousands of students previously labeled EMH were found eligible for the regular academic program, tutorial programs for the slow-learner, or for services in the learning disabilities program. This admission of error shook the confidence of parents, administrators, students teachers and the public in our educational system. The public at large started asking for accountability. The number of special education advocates argued for new organizational, supervisory, curriculum, and instructional strategies to increase the academic success for these students prior to and once they have been found eligible for special education services.

Another part of the "challenge" and a source of concern of parents, administrators, students, and teachers is the seemingly 'life sentence' special education labels carry with them. Learning disabilities services

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[2]Keogh, B. K. (1988). Perspectives on the regular education initiative. Learning Disabilities Focus, 4(1), 3-5.

and behavior disordered services in particular, are suppose to remediate the student exceptional needs and then allow them to transition back into the regular academic program.

Little data is available regarding the number of students successfully remediated, or who have successfully compenstated for deficits and returned to the regular academic program. From my sixteen years of experience with the special education programs in Chicago Public Schools, however, I can say that very few have been returned. Although we assure the parents and students, at the multidisciplinary conferences, that the prime objective of the program is the move students back into the mainstream, this rarely happens.

These and other concerns sparked a movement known as the Regular Education Initiative (REI). It is in the forefront advocating reform of the regular and special education programs. The REI proposal to merge special and regular education has never been more popular than it is today. According to William E. Davis, the REI movement is advocating, "that the general education system assume unequivocal, primary responsibility for all students in our public school - including identified handicapped students as well as those students who have special needs of some type." (Davis, 1989, p. 440)[3]

Supporters of the REI caught wind of the fact that many administrators, teachers (regular and special education), parents and students have no idea what should be happening in the special education

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[3]Davis, W. E. (1989). The regular education initiative debate: Its promises and problems. Exceptional Children, 55(5), 440-446.

classes. Principals were evaluating special education teacher performance on criteria that had nothing to do with the appropriateness of the program in meeting the needs of the children they were serving. It's as if special education programs have a mystique surrounding them and only a very few 'chosen ones' could understand the impact the program was having on the children involved.

Alan Hilton (1984, p. 35)[4] defines the problem as follows, "many principals eventually have to acknowledge to themselves that they have little understanding of special education. Even the required college courses they took on the exceptional child and the administration of special education did not prepare them to evaluate these classrooms. Certainly, Individual Education Plans (IEP's) and individualized instruction are necessary, but simply to note their presence and sign the paper is obviously insufficient. Many principals recognize that they need measures that will assist then in judging both the quality and quantity of education received by the children in special education programs."

We must be careful not to place the blame for ineffective special education programs on the shoulders of principals alone. Prior to September 1989, central and district offices claimed authority over special education programs in the public schools. At the central and district level special education coordinators and supervisory staff were assigned to monitor programs, staffings, compliance and enrollment. The principal, already inundated with other school related responsibilities, was more than

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[4]Hilton, A., Faught, K., & Hagen, M. (1984). A yardstick for special education. Principal, 64(2), 34-36.

willing to relinquish any and all authority over the special education programs. According to Williams (1987, p.8).[5] "In view of accountability from the organizational structure traditionally, each building in a school district manages and administers the policies established by the local board of education. It is not surprising that school principals at both the elementary and secondary level often see themselves as reacting rather than initiating. Moreover, if one listens to proponents of site management we should not be surprised to hear them say that building principals have been somewhat reluctant to take the initiative in trying to do whatever is necessary to move their school toward greater excellence."

The principals felt that the specialists who were sent to supervise the programs would take care of everything related to the special education programs, however, the principals knew that they were ultimately liable for every program within their school.

The Influence of the School Reform Act

In addition to the close scrutiny given special education came a renewed focus on the effectiveness of the entire educational system. It is the opinion of many that the system, as a whole, receives failing grades here and across the country.

In Chicago, the implementation of the Chicago Public Schools (CPS) School Reform Act is probably the most important change in education for this generation of students. There has been a shift in responsibility for

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[5]Williams, S. (1987). The Accountability Act. Unpublished raw data. p.8.

educating regular and special education students, from central and district offices, to the individual schools, both elementary and high schools. As of September 1989, the principals have inherited the "challenge". No longer will central or district office staff be responsible for programs within the schools. No monitors, coordinators, or supervisors will be sent to assume responsibility for programs existing within the schools. Each public school will be governed by its own elected Local School Council consisting of parent, teacher, community, and student representatives.

The empowered Local School Council (LSC) allows individual schools to initiate programs and accomplish reforms at the building level. Building administrators and LSC's can focus on items concerning their particular population. Many administrators, teachers, parents, and students have had deep concerns regarding the special education programs and services in their schools. Some of the more active parents, teachers and administrators have long since embraced the the REI philosophy.

The special education programs in Chicago have presented a challenge to all parties involved with them. Partly because of the vast number of students enrolled in them, the legal ramifications surrounding them, and the vague eligibility guidelines structuring them, it has been difficult to identify the party accountable for its effectiveness.

The Special Education Supervisory Hierarchy in Chicago Public School

To better understand the challenge facing principals regarding the education of special education students let's take a look at the supervisory staff responsible for monitoring the special education programs at the central office level in Chicago Public Schools.

Up until June 1989, special education programs fell under the jurisdiction of the Department of Pupil Personnel and Special Education Services. As indicated in the 1985-86 Administrative Offices Interim Directory, the supervisory staff was as follows:

Assistant Superintendent of the Department of Pupil Personnel and Special Education Services

Director of Pupil Personnel/Director of Special Education/Director of Due Process

Director of Special Education

Director of Bureau of Physically Handicapped	Director of Bureau of Mentally Handicapped	Director of Bureau of Learning Disabilities	Director of Bureau of Special Needs
7Coordinators	5 Coordinators	4 Coordinators	8 Coordinators
12 IIT's	25 IIT's	35 IIT's	25 IIT's

Although the exact number of coordinators and Instructional Intervention Teachers (IIT's) varied from week to week, these approximate figures will give you an idea of the supervisory hierarchy serving the special education programs in CPS.

Direct supervision of special education programs for the mild or moderately handicapped or disabled had been the responsibility of program coordinators and Instructional Intervention Teachers (IIT's) in the 23 district offices. Supervision of the severe and profoundly handicapped or disabled students had been the responsibility of central office coordinators and IIT's with the exception of the high schools whose

district special education coordinators supervised all special education programs within their districts.

During the period between 1985 and 1989 there was a power struggle going on between the high school district special education coordinators and the central office special education coordinators. The district coordinators, with the support of their district superintendents, finally wrested authority from central office coordinators. This shift in power resulted in increased time spent in the schools by the IIT's.

The IIT position came into existence in the 1970's. IIT's were once known as master teachers and IEP specialists. All three functioned to assist the special education teacher.

On May 18, 1982, a Chicago Public Schools Personnel Bulletin advertising the position described the IIT as follows:

Position and Duties

Instructional Intervention Teachers will assist in upgrading the efficiency and quality of the instructional program. They will assist in establishing pupil eligibility for placement, participate in multi-disciplinary staffings and annual reviews, develop and monitor IEP's, collect and collate data and information related to the program, participate in in-service activities, develop curriculum and instructional material, provide appropriate interim service to students awaiting placement in learning disabilities programs, assist in monitoring and evaluation procedures.

Qualifications and Experience

Applicants must be regularly certificated and appointed teachers and must qualify as teachers of the learning disabled. Applicants must submit a letter of recommendation from supervisors under whom they have worked. Chicago Public School applicants with current efficiency ratings of excellent or superior need not submit such letters. Applicants must have had three years of special education experience in the Chicago Public Schools or in another school system.

Salary

The salary for these positions is based upon the salary the individual would receive as a teacher at the appropriate lane and step of the 39-weeks teacher salary schedule. Transportation reimbursement will be provided.

The IIT's were to many special education classroom teachers the only direct link with central and district offices. Huntington-Lumb (1989, pp. 1-2),[6] in her correspondence to the Interim Board of Education regarding the organizational strides of Crane High School wrote, "The special education department at Crane High School is not only in state mandated compliance but has also developed, with the assistance of the Instructional Intervention Teachers, and Instructional Learning Disabilities Support Program. Students who were classified as Severe Learning Disabled and self-contained at the elementary level, are now receiving direct classroom instruction in accordance with their Individualized Education Programs (IEP's), by special education teachers who hold state certification in LD and in the subject area they teach."

It was generally agreed by administrators, principals, and teachers that the IIT's were the best direct support ever provided to assist the special education teachers in the CPS.

In 1987, pressure from the Office of Civil Rights and several advocacy groups had intensified to the point where CPS was facing the loss of millions of dollars. Charges that the paper work in special education programs was out of compliance and some students were well past the 60 day

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[6]Huntington-Lumb, Q. (1989, July). In support of organizational strides. Crane High School. (Letter to member of Chicago School Board). pp. 1-2.

time limit for staffings only added to the negative publicity surrounding special education accountability. To make matters even worse, the special education drop-out rate ranged as high as 50% in some high schools by the time of graduation. This could only mean that the services being provided, although better than what had been received, did not meet the needs of the students.

The twenty-three districts and central office staffs started using the IIT's almost exclusively for staffings, compliance monitoring, and data gathering.

The initial purpose of the IIT, to assist in upgrading the efficiency and quality of the instructional program, was replaced with supervisory responsibilities. With no direct involvement in the special education classroom, once again, the teachers were left without direct support to help them in improving the quality of their programs. The IIT could not assist with team teaching or clinical supervision programs with the special education and regular classroom teachers.

Again, no one knew exactly what was going on in the special education program. The number of students getting successfully transitioned out of special education programs remained low and the number of special education drop-outs remained high. According to McKenna (1989)[7], it's this type of redirecting of resources and staff that creates resistance to special education programs in the high schools.

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[7]McKenna, B. (1989). Whatever happened to team teaching? American Educator, 13(2), 15-19.

Lack of proper support is nothing new in the field of education. Thelen (1960)[8] felt that the lack of effective dissemination was a major source of discouragement, resentment and resistance to the special education program on behalf of the regular classroom teachers and administrators. It is the fear of being burdened with one more 'half-bake' program without resources or support. They feel that once they get involved with special education or any new program outside of their area of responsibility and expertise, they would become responsible for it's implementation and left on their own.

Generally high school teachers tend to be polarized. They often stay within their departments and sometimes do not get to know other staff members within their own schools. Because meetings are held by departments, large general meetings or social gatherings are the few occasions that the full staff participates as a whole.

It has been documented by Goodlad (1983),[9] that high school teachers most often attend in-services which focus on college or university based activities related to their particular area of interest while elementary teachers attend sessions which cut across interest based subjects.

Given their fear of new programs' unknown expectations and the natural tendency toward departmentalization, and separation an effective special

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[8]Thelen, H. A. (1960). Education and the human quest. New York: Harper and Bros.

[9]Goodlad, J. I. (1984). A place called school. New York: McGraw-Hill.

education program must be carefully and cooperatively developed and it must involve on-going direct support services.

To better understand the special education services at the high school level let's take a closer look at one of the programs that is available, the Learning Disabilities program.

The Continuum of Learning Disabilities Services in Chicago Public Schools

The Learning Disabilities (LD) program at the secondary level has been primarily a mainstream program to accommodate specific instructional needs of secondary students who exhibit various degrees of severity (mild, moderate, and severe) of processing deficits which impede their academic progress and adjustment in school.

Since the LD high school program is basically a mainstream program we need a clear understanding of mainstream or mainstreaming. According to Kaufman (1975, p. 4),[10] "Mainstreaming refers to the temporal, instructional, and social integration of eligible exceptional children with normal peers based on an ongoing, individually determined, educational planning and programming process and requires clarification of responsibility among regular and special educators, administrative, instructional, and supportive personnel."

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[10]Kaufman, M. J., Gottlieb, J.A., Agard, J. A. "Mainstreaming: Toward and Explanation of the Construct". Focus on Exceptional Children 7(3):1-12.; 1975.

Mainstreaming has its drawbacks, however, Caster (1975, p. 174),[11] provides a more detailed definition of the pros and cons of the mainstreaming program, "Mainstreaming is:

- Providing the most appropriate education for each child in the least restrictive setting
- Looking at the educational needs of children instead of clinical or diagnostic labels such as mentally handicapped, learning disabled, physically handicapped, hearing impaired, or gifted
- Looking for and creating alternatives that will help general educators serve children with learning or adjustment problems in the regular setting.
- Uniting the skills of general education and special education so that all children may have equal educational opportunity.

Mainstreaming is not:

- Wholesale return of all exceptional children in special classes to regular class
- Permitting children with special needs to remain in regular classrooms without the support services they need
- Ignoring the need of some children for a more specialized program than can be provided in the general educational setting."

Research presented by Washington (1985), contends that another drawback to the mainstream program is fear. "The mainstreaming movement has frightened many educators because the drive for equality would force

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[11] Caster, J. (1975). Share our specialty: What is mainstreaming? Exceptional Children, 42(3), 174.

the educational establishment to provide an appropriate education for all children regardless of the nature and severity of their handicap. Much fear centered around the unfounded suspicion that retarded children would be 'dumped' into regular classrooms where the teachers would not have the skills to teach them. However, since change is inevitable educators need to work to modify the school structure so that it is more conducive to students, socially as well as academically, with different backgrounds and characteristics." (Washington, 1985, pp. 4-5)[12]

Mainstreaming is successfully serving the special needs of the exceptional student in a regular classroom.

The degree and intensity of LD service provided for a student is determined by the Individualized Education Program (IEP), or the plan for academic success. The LD program provides several approaches which include: Resource Support, Cooperative Team Teaching, and Direct Instructional Services.

Resource Support services, according to CPS's Consent Decree and the School Reform Act Article 4.06, provides for students whose educational needs can be adequately met through part-time instruction by an LD teacher. Part-time instruction is considered as less than 50 percent of the school day. Such instruction may be delivered in the resource room or on an itinerant basis. Resource services are provided for students with mild to moderate learning disabilities. The service is designed to reinforce concepts for mastery of learning strategies. These strategies cross

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[12]Washington, I. (1985). (Mainstreaming vs. Traditional education). Unpublished raw data. pp. 4-5.

content area boundaries and can be used in all subjects. Resource services focus on developing study, organizational, note-taking test taking, outlining, and paraphrasing skills.

In his book Alley (1979), justifies the need for this type of service stating, "Because students are often reinforced for making 'appropriate appearances' of learning they often fail to learn the strategies to solve problems that generalize across settings. Many behaviors - for example, getting assignments in on time, writing neatly, looking busy - are often misinterpreted by students as being the most important ones in surviving the school game. Instead, the emphasis of instruction should be on the acquisition of effective solution strategies."[13] (Alley, 1979, pp.17)

The Resource Support program adopted a more innovative approach to remediating academic deficits. The LD teacher implements a program that maximizes the acquisition of principles that would facilitate problem solving and application of skills in a variety of situations and in a variety of subjects. Students receiving Resource Support remain in the regular class and receive services, according to their IEP's, 1 or 2 periods daily in the LD classroom. This approach relies heavily on cooperative planning. There are only a few schools implementing this approach, consequently, there is limited data available to determine the effectiveness with adolescents. A major goal of this approach is to facilitate the transfer of strategies across subject boundaries, however

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[13]Alley, G., & Deshler, D. (1979, pp. 17). Teaching the learning disabled adolescent: Strategies and methods. Denver, Colorado: Love Publishing Co.

data is not available to indicate that this does occur. The Resource Support approach does not directly address immediate academic needs, which is another drawback.

The approach described next is the most popular for students with moderate processing deficits. It is called Cooperative Team Teaching.

Hoyt (1978), defines cooperative teaching as a term that assumes two or more parties, each with separate programs, agree to work together in making both programs more successful.

Team teaching according to Lovell (1983 p. 141),[14] "is an organizational structure to facilitate the process through which teachers can cooperate in planning, teaching, and evaluating what has been done. This team teaching approach provides the potential for collaborative supervision. Teachers can share each others plans, make suggestions, observe and describe the learning environment, provide feedback, and participate in cooperative evaluation. The potential exists for collaboration; all that is needed is desire, effort, and competence."

Successful team teaching requires that the participants be willing to work together to accomplish common goals and objectives (Grosvenor and Thode, 1986 pp.39-41).[15]

The Cooperative Team Teaching approach is usually a pull-out program where the student receives instructions in the LD resource room usually 1

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[14]Lovell, J. T., & Wiles, K. (1983). Supervision for better schools (5th ed.). Englewood Cliffs, N. J.: Prentice-Hall.

[15]Grosvenor, R. G., & Thode, B. (1986). Vocational/Academic team teaching. Vocational Education Journal, 61(5), 39-41.

or 2 periods daily. This approach emphasizes instruction in the content areas. Areas of instruction are usually those in which the student is experiencing difficulty or failure. The LD teacher's major responsibility is to help keep the LD student in the regular curriculum program. The LD teacher reports to the regular subject area teacher her/his results from testing, diagnostic/prescriptive teaching, observations, etc.

One of the positive features of this approach, according to Hord (1986),[16] is that the student masters concepts needed to pass examinations which will eventually lead to graduation. Teachers involved in the Cooperative Team Teaching approach join forces, agree on the goal, develop plans and strategies and communicate on a daily or as often as possible basis.

Other strengths of this approach include the following:

- The LD student's immediate needs are addressed
- Students are provided with the support necessary to master the content of particular subjects
- This approach is accepted by the regular content area teacher and parents more readily.

Weaknesses of the Cooperative Team Teaching approach include:

- The main objective is to teach specific content so that the student can respond to classroom assignments, the underlying causes are not delt with.

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[16]Hord, S. M. (1986). A synthesis of research on organizational collaboration. Educational Leadership, 43(5), 22-26.

- Under this approach, withdrawal of support leaves the student in no better shape than before services were provided

- The responsibility for teaching the LD student shifts from the regular classroom teacher to the LD teacher. Once the responsibility for instruction is assumed by the LD teacher, it is difficult for students to return to the regular class teacher for instructions.

- A major limitation to this approach is the training of the teacher. LD teachers at the high school level are not trained to teach all subject areas. They do not have the background to make holistic decisions regarding associating content. The example given by Alley (1979), crystallizes this drawback in his statement, "An LD student who may be a potential historian should not be taught history in a watered down fashion just because he or she lacks the reading skills to gain information from the textbook." (Alley, 1979, pp. 53)[17]

- McKenna (1989), upon reviewing information on this type of program reports that another major barrier to high school team teaching is the strong aversion to breaking-out of the traditional departmentalized structure which high school teachers appear to favor.

The LD umbrella of approaches also provides for Direct Instructional services for students with severe processing, motoric and/or adjustment deficits. It is a pull-out program for LD students who are not able to benefit from the regular academic program.

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[17]Alley, G., & Deshler, D. (1979). Teaching the learning disabled adolescent: Strategies and Methods, p. 53.

At the elementary level these students would receive self contained services where they remain with the LD teacher 50% or more of the school day for instructional services.

At the high school level the student's needs are met by receiving Direct Instructions (DI) from an LD teacher who is also certified or endorsed in the subject area. This is the most intense service provided at the high school level. Depending on the student's ability she/he is mainstreamed according to her/his IEP. Mainstream classes are usually gym and art or classes the student can be successful in.

Often severe learning disabled (SLD) student's IEP stipulates that she/he should be programmed for basic or enrichment English and/or Algebra courses. If the student's deficits are severe enough the IEP will indicate that it may take longer than 4 years for the student to meet the criteria for graduation.

The Direct Instructional program utilizes what Alley (1979), calls the 'Basic Skills Remediation Mode', "This approach provides developmental or remedial instruction for basic academic skill deficits. Reading and math deficits receive the most attention. The skills taught are usually at a level that approximates the student's achievement level. For example, if a sophomore in high school reads on fourth grade level, instructional tasks will be designed to teach basic reading skills typically taught at that

grade level with a goal of sequentially improving the youngster's skills." (Alley, 1979, pp.47)[18]

Strengths of the Direct Instructional approach include the following:

- Smaller class size in the LD class allows for more individualized instructions
- Weaknesses in the basic skills are focused on immediately and intense instructions are designed to remediate that academic deficit
- Increased competence in basic skills should enable the student to perform better in content classes. Correction of these key basic skill deficits may produce rapid content area gains
- Academic gains lead to better self image, and confidence.

Weaknesses of the Direct Instructional approach include the following:

- There is limited time available at the secondary level to take the student from her/his present level of functioning and bridge the gap to the expected level of attainment
- Problems in motivating the LD student using this approach occur because it is too similar to the type of instruction she/he may have received at the elementary level
- Many special materials used to teach basic skills are illustrated or presented in a way that is insulting to a secondary student

The DI approach focuses on a limited number of skill areas usually reading and mathematics

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[18]Alley, G. (1979, pp. 47). Teaching the learning disabled adolescent: Strategies and Methods.

- When progress is noted utilizing special instructional materials, often time is not spent in showing the student how that skill can be generalized to regular classroom materials.

These programmatic approaches seem to cover all the bases as far as the exceptional needs of the LD student, however, few students were successfully transitioning back to the regular class and many were dropping out before they graduated. This would indicate that either the services were ineffective, inadequate, and/or inappropriate.

Considering the Needs of a Particular High School

Learning disabled students coming into high school with reading and/or math scores at the 6th grade level and lower are posing challenges to the educational systems across the country. To address this challenge effectively an academic program with the appropriate support for both teachers and students must be developed. Let's take a closer look at how this challenge has been addressed at a particular high school.

George Washington High School is located on the far southeast side of Chicago. The area served by the school has many characteristics of a small town. It's a senior high school with a student population of approximately 1,600. There are 95 staff members (a ratio of 17/1 students to teachers), excluding; security, teacher aids, office, food service, and maintenance staff. Of the 95 teachers 8 are LD teachers. Of the 1,600 students approximately 138 had been diagnosed as having learning disabilities at the elementary school level (a ratio of 17/1 LD students to LD teacher).

Washington High School, like so many others, is facing the challenge of providing services for an increasing number of LD students coming into high school with reading and/or math levels below 6th grade.

Identifying the Problem

In the 1988-1989 school year the freshmen LD and low functioning students were programmed for the enrichment course for English which is Introduction to High School English, (1989 English Curriculum Guide). This course was designed for high school freshmen whose reading levels were below 6.5. The course provides two class periods of instruction daily, double periods, in which the teacher integrates the teaching of remedial skills and developmental reading and writing skills as well as increasing reading comprehension.

Likewise, they were programmed for the enrichment course for math, Pre Algebra with Support, which is a double period course designed for high school freshmen whose math skills were below 6.5. The teacher integrates remedial and basic skills fundamental to the acquisition of Algebraic concepts.

Approximately 142 LD students were enrolled in the LD program during the 1988-1989 school year. 34 of these students were given the enrichment class for English and/or Algebra. In compliance with their IEP's they also received 1 or 2 periods of LD services daily. Even with enrichment courses and LD support services 21 of the 34 students failed one or both of the enrichment classes they had been programmed for.

A review of last years graduates indicates that between 35% to 45% of the LD students who enrolled at Washington High School four years ago did

not graduate with their class either due to failed classes, transfers to other high schools, or drop out.

As outlined earlier, a variety of LD approaches are provided in Chicago Public Schools, however, the LD students at Washington High School, as elsewhere, showed minimum progress. Regular and LD teachers, students and parents, and Dr. Vallina, Principal of Washington High School, were not satisfied with the effectiveness of the LD program. As a result of these failures they made the reorganization of the LD program one of the priorities for curriculum and instructional reform for the 1989-1990 school year.

This year a committee was formed including the administration, and representatives from staff, Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), LSC, LD and regular teachers and students. It was the pre-planning committee. Meetings were held so that everyones concerns and particular interests could be aired. It was agreed that everyone was committed to improving the quality and effectiveness of the LD program and the services it provided.

Utilizing the Team Approach

It was agreed that the best way to achieve this goal was to work as a team in planning, developing, and implementing curriculum and instructional strategies to better serve the LD students. Our members must have felt as Cochrane did when he wrote, "The most obvious strategy would be for the special educator to spend a certain amount of time in the regular classroom suggesting appropriate curriculum and strategies to facilitate the

education of the mainstreamed child or children." (Cochrane, 1977, pp. 508)[19]

From the pre-planning committee a team was organized which included both regular and LD teachers who would be involved in the implementation of the agreed upon approach, a LSC parent representative, the principal, and an LD student representative.

A schedule for regular meetings was set-up. The goal of the team was discussed, agreed on and written up; to research the needs of Washington High School students with learning disabilities, to become aware of as many approaches used outside of Chicago to meet the needs of LD students, and to implement an approach that would yield greater academic success for the students involved.

Research and Review of Other Programs

Over the next two weeks six meetings were held to discuss information regarding other programs used in other school systems to address the LD 'challenge'. Some of the programs discussed were as follows:

A. The Mentor Teacher Program (Wagner, 1985)[20] which was started in California in 1983. Qualifications: The Mentor Teacher (MT) must be a certified classroom teacher with permanent status in the school district, and substantial recent experience in classroom instruction. The MT would

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[19]Cochrane, P. V., & Westling, D. L. (1977). The principal and mainstreaming: Ten suggestions for success. Educational Leadership, 34(7), pp. 506-510.

[20]Wagner, L. A. (1985). Ambiguities and possibilities in California's mentor teacher program. Educational Leadership, 43(3), 23-29.

have to have demonstrated superior teaching ability in areas of communication, subject-matter knowledge, and mastery of a range of teaching strategies necessary to meet the needs of pupils with different learning needs. Responsibility: The MT would be used to assist and guide new teachers and in some instances more experienced teachers. MT's may provide staff development for teachers and develop special curriculum. They would not participate in the evaluation of teachers. The IIT position described on pages 9 and 10 is an example of the MT position described here.

This program was discussed and rejected by the team because at the high school level it would be impossible for one teacher to have knowledge of all subjects. The program we were looking for must support all teachers working with LD students, not just new teachers.

B. The Teacher Advisor Project of Marion County (Kent, 1985)[21] was implemented nine years ago as a staff development program to support teachers in new roles. Two new positions were developed by this program; the Teacher Advisor, and the Peer Facilitator. Qualifications: The Teacher Advisor (TA) had to have at least 5 years of teaching experience in Marion County schools. The TA had to have good communication and public relations skills as well as superior teaching abilities. Responsibilities: The TA position could be either full or half time. Pay was the same as a regular teacher salary. The position involved working with staff members at two or three schools. The TA was also responsible for training and facilitating for the classroom teachers.

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[21]Kent, K. M. (1985). A successful program of teachers assisting teachers. Educational Leadership, 43(3), 30-33.

Drawbacks of this program were its inability to provide continuous direct support to the classroom teacher because she/he had to be responsible for two or three schools at once. The TA's position was set apart from the teacher as a supervisor having to 'train' the teacher. We were looking for a more 'team approach'.

The Peer Facilitator's (PF) qualifications were the same as for the TA. Responsibilities: The PF would be a regular classroom teacher released three days each month to work with the Teacher Advisor Project. The PF would receive a $1,200.00 a year stipend and release time. The PF was responsible for coordinating a district level network for communicating shared programmatic experiences as well as working with the staff at designated schools.

Drawbacks of this program included the need for additional training for a program which is operating in California, resistance on the part of regular teachers due to jealousies and fear of the TA's and PF's becoming too empowered in the role of supervisor.

C. The Assisting Teacher (Yunk, 1988) is an innovative solution to the problem of trying to find enough hours in the day to handle the work load associated with providing instructional support, responding to curriculum needs and ensuring continuing professional staff growth. Qualifications: The Assisting Teacher (AT) must be an experienced and respected classroom teacher, have excellent instructional and classroom management skills. The AT would continue to teach half-time to increase credibility with other teachers by providing daily involvement and a practical appreciation of teachers needs. The AT would remain on a teacher's salary schedule.

Responsibilities would include:

- facilitating formal efforts of the professional staff in curriculum improvement projects,
- assisting in interpretation and implementation of newly adopted curriculum materials,
- coordinating the acquisition and use of needed supplementary curriculum materials,
- interpreting the district's testing program and help coordinate the action plan,
- working with the principal to organize and coordinate grade level meeting to enhance the instructional program,
- working with special services teams in planning instructional alternatives for special education students,
- performing other tasks and assumes other responsibilities assigned by the principal,
- be available for team teaching units,
- coordinating peer observation opportunities,
- assisting beginning teachers in developing and refining skills,
- keeping abreast of and helps interpret current research in the area of curriculum,
- supporting the library media specialist in maintaining curriculum and instructional resource materials,
- planning and presents programs for interpreting curriculum to faculty, Board of Education, PTO and others.

The major drawbacks to this program are the unrealistic responsibilities placed on one part-time teacher. There is no incentive

for teachers to even apply for a job such as this one. (Yunk, and others, 1988, pp. 34-36)[22]

Several other model approaches were reviewed and discussed before we narrowed the field down to one or two promising models.

Development of the Intervention Teacher Position

Out of these meetings came a clear understanding of the type of supervisory services which were needed to provide direct support to the regular educator in order to meet the demands of low academic skills and processing deficits. Our goal was similar to the desired outcomes of the clinical supervision approach. This approach, according to Cogan, "may be defined as the rationale and practice designed to improve the teachers classroom performance. It takes its principle data from the events of the classroom. The analysis of these data and the relationship between teacher and supervisor form the basis of the program, procedures, and strategies designed to improve the student's learning by improving the teachers classroom behavior." (Cogan, 1973, pp. 9)[23]

The Intervention Teacher program differs from the clinical supervision model in that we do not have supervisor/teacher partnerships but rather LD and regular teacher partnerships. However, the clinical supervision outline was valuable in establishing guidelines to initiate the IT program.

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[22]Yunk, D., Woolfolk, J., & Spiker, J. (1988). The assisting teacher: A promising concept. Principal, 67(3), 34-36.

[23]Cogan, M. L. (1973). Clinical Supervision. Boston, Massachusetts: Houghton Mifflin.

Cogan's (1973) eight step cycle of supervision was used to define needed steps involved in establishing the Instructional Teacher program:

- Establishing the teacher-supervisor relationship

The first phase of the Intervention Teaching program is the period in which the LD teacher;

. establishes a positive 'clinical' relationship with regular teachers;

. helps the teacher to achieve understanding about the LD program's history, methods and strategies;

. begin to cooperatively plan our new roles and functions in the Intervention Program. This is completed before entering the teachers classroom.

- Planning with the teacher

The second phase is to plan a lesson or unit together. The lesson is planned in terms of objectives for the student and teacher. The plans would include specific outcomes, anticipated problems of instruction, materials and strategies of teaching, processes of learning, and provisions for feedback and evaluation.

- Planning the strategy of observation

The LD teacher plans the objectives, the processes, and the physical and technical arrangements for the observation and the collection of data.

- Observing instruction

The LD teacher observes the instruction in person, in the classroom recording information related to classroom events.

- Analyzing the teaching-learning processes

Following the observation, the teacher and the LD teacher analyze the events of the class in light of the behaviors of the LD students as the teacher conducted her/his class. Information regarding processing strengths and weaknesses of the LD students must be discusses as well how well they participate in the group during instructional, independent study, and transitioning from one task to another.

- Planning the strategy of the conference

The meeting time must be scheduled so that it is convenient for both teachers. The regular teacher must feel comfortable with the conference agenda. The goal is to share observations with one another.

- The conference

The participants are generally the regular and LD teacher working as a team. As need and agreement arises for outside resources, other participants can be invited to the conference.

- Renewed planning

The teachers decide on the kinds of change to be sought in the classroom. They plan the next lesson and include the changes they have agreed upon for the next instructional period. The last phase then becomes the planning phase for the next meeting.

Mr. DeRow, publisher of the George Washington High School Newsletter for Parents, sums up the need to develop the Intervention Teacher program as follows: "After several meetings with department chairperson, Mrs. Deadmon, Principal Dr. Vallina, and special education personnel, it was decided that the 'Intervention Method' would be used to better serve our special education students."

"With this new method, special education teachers go directly into the classroom to assist the regular classroom teacher. This method enables the special education teacher to closely observe students, detect weaknesses and strengths, and use intervention techniques to ensure successful completion of all classroom assignments. L.D. teachers involved are: Mr. DeRow & Mrs. D. Jackson, English; Mrs. Deadmon & Ms. Thompson, Math; Mr. McCann & Ms. Coleman, History." (DeRow, 1989, pp. 3)[24]

There were some suggestions that we simplify the IT program by using the three interdependent behavior systems presented by Lovell (1983); pre observation behavior, observation behavior, and post observation behavior. This model was rejected in favor of Cogan's more structured approach. Perhaps this behavioral system approach will be considered after the IT program has been in effect long enough to assess its effectiveness.

The IT program is a cross between Direct Instructions and Cooperative Team Teaching which was described earlier. It is designed to provide effective support services to the subject area teachers and direct instructions to the learning disabled students. Students involved in the program must be functioning below the 6th grade level in reading and/or math. The theory behind this program has been explained by Alley (1979), who suggests that if an English teacher and a learning disabilities teacher are working together on behalf of an LD students, the English teacher can best specify what the most important concepts and objectives are in a given English unit. The learning disabilities teacher is skilled in modifying

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[24]DeRow, E. (1989, November). Newsletter for Parents. (Available from [George Washington High School, 3535 E. 114th St., Chicago, IL 60617])

and adapting various materials and instructional techniques for teaching those content items most effectively. "When the teachers work together, the LD student has a better chance of learning the appropriate content in a way that best suits that student's needs." (Alley, 179, pp. 39)[25]

The IT program would provide more intense services to the LD student since she/he would remain in the double period enrichment or basic skills class in English and or Algebra. The LD teacher would give direct instructions while working along with the regular subject area teacher.

In order for the Intervention Teacher approach to work effectively at the high school level several factors must be taken into consideration:

First, both LD and regular teachers have to provide direction and input in order to cooperatively plan to meet the needs in the LD student.

Secondly, each professional involved in Intervention Teaching is assumed to have knowledge and expertise that can benefit the LD student. A major goal of the program is to tap each teacher's expertise.

Third, the IT method requires that participants be willing to change their teaching practices based on the plans that are made for the student.

Judith Little (1985)[26] in her article of Teacher Advisors, suggests six principles to use in order to establish acceptance, mutual respect and close working relationships between team members:

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[25]Alley, G., & Deshler, D. (1979). Teaching the learning disabled adolescent: Strategies and Methods. (1979, pp. 39).

[26]Little, J. W. (1985). Teachers as teacher advisors: The delicacy of collegial leadership. Educational Leadership, 43(3), pp. 34-36.

1. Common language - make a deliberate effort to use shared ideas and language to describe, understand and refine teaching.
2. Focus - focus on one or two key questions, issues, situations, or problems and address them with depth, persistence, imagination, and good humor.
3. Hard evidence - keep a record of classroom interactions as a basis for generalizing questions, drawing conclusions, and pursuing alternatives.
4. Interaction - engage in lively interaction with one another, making the conference a vehicle for joint work on teaching and an opportunity to improve your ability to learn from one another.
5. Predictability - build trust in one another's intentions by relying on a known, predictable set of topics, criteria, and methods.
6. Reciprocity - build trust by acknowledging and deferring to one another's knowledge and skill, by talking to each other in ways that preserve individual dignity, and by giving your work together a full measure of energy, thought and attention.

Fourth, planning conferences between LD and regular teachers must be scheduled regularly, at various stages in the developing program. Meetings to discuss LD student's programming, growth or academic level changes must be scheduled frequently. These conferences or meetings can take place during planning periods, study hall, lunch periods, before and after school. The important thing is that the timing be convenient for everyone involved.

Conclusion

Considering the student's needs is the priority. The emphasis should not be on labeling, then servicing those needs, the emphasis must be on meeting those needs now. Remember, the system is not infallible. Many students labeled one thing were really in need of something else. In the IT program the LD teacher will be giving direct services in a particular room because of the LD student in the class but not exclusively to the LD students. All of the students in the class will benefit from the Intervention Teacher approach. Many schools are focusing on the special needs of all students, not just a select few.

Principals are empowered to assemble appropriate professionals and other resources for delivering effective, coordinated, comprehensive services for all students based on individual educational needs rather than forcing 'eligible' students into the rigid framework which existed previously.

It is important to remember that there is little research data available on the effectiveness of special education approaches. We are not trying to say that any of the approaches discussed in this paper are 'bad' but that they did not meet our particular needs at this time.

It appears reasonable to conclude, however, that no one approach meets the needs of all LD adolescents.

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